

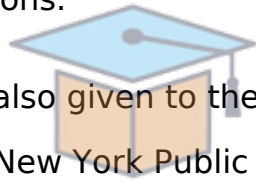
Acknowledgments

Acknowledgments play a vital role in expressing appreciation to those whose contributions shaped the book. The author extends profound gratitude to the late John Lewis, whose support and insights were invaluable to the creation of this work. Their first meeting with Lewis took place in February 2019 in Atlanta, where he offered his full support for the project. Due to the challenges posed by the pandemic, face-to-face interviews were replaced by meaningful phone conversations, allowing the author to gain an in-depth understanding of Lewis's life. Michael Collins, Lewis's chief of staff, played a critical role throughout the process by granting access to key individuals and ensuring the factual integrity of the narrative, providing invaluable assistance in the research.

An essential part of the research was interviewing a diverse group of about 250 individuals, including prominent figures like President Obama, President Clinton, and Secretary of State Hillary Clinton, all of whom shared personal anecdotes and memories of John Lewis. Their contributions, along with those of Lewis's family, colleagues, and friends, were crucial in enriching the narrative, particularly in areas where archival materials were either insufficient or absent. This diverse input helped the author paint a more detailed and nuanced picture of Lewis's extraordinary life. The unique perspectives from these influential individuals, combined with previously unavailable records, provided a deeper insight into the significance of John Lewis's legacy and the impact he made on the civil rights movement, reinforcing his role as a historical and moral leader.

The author also expresses gratitude to those who provided private materials and participated in interviews with Lewis, contributing to the research's richness. Archie Allen, who had tried to write a biography of Lewis in 1968, generously shared his extensive archive, adding historical context to the story. Furthermore, collaborations

with historians and academic institutions, including access to Henry Louis Gates's materials from the show *Finding Your Roots* and invaluable recordings from Danny Lyon and Sean Wilentz, added depth and accuracy to the research. The insights from these resources helped enhance the historical authenticity of the biography, offering a well-rounded perspective on Lewis's journey, values, and the broader civil rights struggle. These collaborations significantly strengthened the research and allowed for a more comprehensive exploration of Lewis's legacy in a way that honored his immense contributions.



Summary

Special mention is also given to the archivists and librarians at institutions like Rutgers University and the New York Public Library, whose expertise in organizing and providing access to relevant research materials proved indispensable. Their efforts ensured that critical documents and resources were available to the author during the writing process. Additionally, the contributions of various historians and journalists who provided scholarly input were instrumental in broadening the context of the narrative. Their diverse perspectives on the civil rights movement enriched the storytelling and offered a more multifaceted understanding of John Lewis's place within that pivotal chapter of American history.

The support from Rutgers University is acknowledged, with the author expressing gratitude to officials and colleagues who helped create an environment conducive to research and scholarship. Financial assistance from external grants and fellowships also played a pivotal role in completing the project, and thanks are extended to the organizations and individuals who provided this crucial backing. This external support ensured that the author had the resources and opportunities to fully dedicate themselves to the project, allowing for a thorough exploration of John Lewis's life and work.

Finally, the contributions of research assistants, particularly Katherine Thai, are acknowledged for their invaluable support throughout the process. The author also credits the emotional encouragement from writing groups, mentors, and family members, particularly during the more difficult stages of writing. This support, both

intellectual and emotional, was crucial in completing the biography, which is ultimately dedicated to the author's parents, whose commitment to social justice inspired the themes that are central to Lewis's life and this biography. The author's deep appreciation for their guidance and encouragement throughout the writing process is clear, as it allowed them to explore and document the profound impact of John Lewis on the world.

